

BIOLOGY 470: Marine field methods

Summer Term 2026

Instructor:

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Learning objectives:

- To learn and perform some field methods used in the science of marine ecology, including snorkeling, water and boating safety, placement and use of marine instruments, vessel operations and basic marine field taxonomy.
- To develop a greater familiarity with self-developed research, including formulating hypotheses, creating practical field plans, field data gathering and management, and how to summarize and present on findings
- To gain some exposure to the methods of working professionals in the field of marine and aquatic science in local settings

Text: There is no textbook for this class. Lab activities, field plans, and schedules will all be presented in-person by the instructor for this intensive field course.

Course schedule: Monday 4 May through Friday 15 May 2026, inclusive. Not all days will be used, depending on weather and field factors. The weekend will likely be time off, as conditions allow. Hours may be irregular, as well as locations. Students will need to have transportation to sites. Almost all activities will involve the whole class, and briefings will be given in person. There may be some late nights (up to 10PM) and early mornings, depending on field conditions. Participation by all students in all scheduled activities is expected.

Required components for the course: In order to pass students must complete the two primary field research projects, as well as attend at least 9 of the 10 class days. Passing the swim test is not required for the course, but without it snorkel operations will not be allowed, and will be substituted with intertidal sampling.

Evaluation:

Class projects (2 total): 60%

Participation 40%

- 1) Strickland cruise planning, execution, and report (30%):
This cruise will be in the first week, and will involve planning, training, a day at sea, data processing, and presentation of findings. This cruise will be in four-person teams.
- 2) Group or individual research project planning, execution and report (30%):

The second main project for this course will take place in the second week, and will involve planning, up to two days of field work, data processing, and presentation of findings in a group format.

- 3) Participation (40%): Students will be evaluated individually by the instructor on quality of engagement, thoughtfulness, attention to detail, and thoroughness of execution of class activities.

There will be no midterm or final formal exams in this field course, and the above components are subject to change in the event of equipment, weather, or other field considerations in this field course.

Course grading will follow the official UVIC undergraduate university-wide grading system, as outlined here:

<https://www.uvic.ca/calendar/future/undergrad/index.php#/policy/S1AAgoGuV?bc=true&bcCurrent=14%20-%20Grading&bcGroup=Undergraduate%20Academic%20Regulations&bcItemType=policies>

As per the above university-wide system, it is required to achieve a minimum of 50 to achieve a passing grade. Cumulative individual grades for the term below 50 points where the student completed all elements will be assigned a grade of F, and cumulative individual grades for the term where the student did not finish all course requirements by the end of term or session will be assigned a grade of N, which indicates that a student did not complete required course work, resulting in the failure. An N grade is calculated as a 0 on the GPA scale and, while often representing a 0-49% score, signifies incomplete requirements rather than merely low marks.

Missed class events or lab assignments must be reported to the instructor or your lab TA by email, as soon as possible. Reasonable accommodations may be made by the instructor, on a case-by-case basis; please contact as soon as any conflict is known and provide all relevant details by email. Certified or private medical details are not needed, please provide only what is needed to allow for instructor evaluation of the case. Any critical course component deferrals need to be in writing for them to impact cumulative individual grades for the term. If the student did not complete assignments and was not given a pre-arranged deferral in writing by instructor, that item will be potentially be graded as zero. Given the short time frame for the course and the intensive engaged format, in participation each of the three major components is required.

In the event of late submissions, cases will be judged individually, and assignments may be reduced by 25% of the grade per day or fraction thereof, starting at the required time of submission. If there are extenuating circumstances, please report and discuss these as early as possible to both the instructor and the assigned course TA.

Academic regulation:

Academic integrity is intellectual honesty and responsibility for academic work that you submit individual or group work. It involves commitment to the values of honesty, trust, and responsibility. It is expected that students will respect these ethical values in all activities related to learning, teaching, research, and service.

1. VERY IMPORTANT: UVic's policy on academic integrity (<https://tinyurl.com/ycjeyumu>)
2. Know your responsibilities as outlined in the calendar (<https://tinyurl.com/y3o8q586>)
3. The Center for Accessible Learning is here to help (<https://www.uvic.ca/services/cal/>)

4. Grades are assigned on a percentage scale in accordance with UVic policy as outlined in the calendar (<https://tinyurl.com/y7qydfyy>)
5. Please read UVic's policy on copyright (<https://www.uvic.ca/library/featured/copyright/>)
6. Important UVic dates including dates for adding and dropping course, holidays, etc. (<https://www.uvic.ca/calendar/dates/>)
7. Please read UVic's policy on plagiarism (<https://www.uvic.ca/library/research/citation/plagiarism/index.php>)

Equity & CAL policies: UVic is committed to upholding the values of equity, diversity, inclusion and human rights in our living, learning and work environments. We know that diversity underpins excellence, and that we all share responsibility for creating an equitable, diverse and inclusive community. As per UVIC policies, all assessments will be conducted in accordance with the Center for Accessible Learning (CAL) Universal Design for Learning (UDL) guidelines. Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or CAL as soon as possible. CAL staff are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations. The sooner you let us know your needs the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

Course Experience Survey:

I value your feedback on this course. At the end of term you can complete a confidential course experience survey (CES). The survey provides feedback to me regarding the course and helps the department to improve. You will receive email reminders nearer the time but please be thinking about the following three questions during the course: 1) What strengths did your instructor demonstrate that helped you learn in this course? 2) Please provide specific suggestions as to how the instructor could have helped you learn more effectively. 3) Please provide specific suggestions as to how this course could be improved.

We acknowledge the ləkʷəŋən peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands and the Songhees, Esquimalt and W̱SÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.
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